

FEB 15 2007

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Culbertson, Montana

## Montola, FPCC Have Plans For WIRED Grant Money

By Paul Murray

Sustainable Systems LLC of Culbertson (Montola) and Fort Peck Tribes were both recent recipients of a portion of the more than \$1.3 million in Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development Program grant money, Governor Brian Schweitzer announced on Jan. 24.

A total of five different businesses received grant portions, with Sustainable Systems LLC being awarded the largest amount, \$700,000. Fort Peck Tribes is receiving \$150,000, which will be administered by Fort Peck Community College.

The Montola plant in Culbertson presently employs 15 full-time employees and will add an additional 39 employees as a result of the WIRED grant, which will be leveraged with an additional \$3 million in matching funds.

"We expect to add those [39] jobs within a year," said Neil Turnbull, Montola plant manager, in an interview shortly after the grant announcement.

When asked specifically what types of new workers will be hired, Turnbull responded, "There'll be all kinds of jobs. There'll be supervisory, entry-level, and some will be management positions."

All of the new jobs to be added as a result of the WIRED grant will be full-time positions with benefits, Turnbull explained.

Assiniboine & Sioux Tribal Enterprises executive director

Mark Sansaver will serve as project director for the grant money awarded to the Fort Peck Tribes and Fort Peck Community College.

FPCC plans to use the grant money to train workers for bio-product related employment.

The 25 or more unemployed individuals who will receive training as a result of the WIRED grant money at FPCC will train as cement workers who will be "finishers on local projects," Sansaver said. "We'll be producing qualified workers for bio-fuel endeavors."

When asked how quickly this training will begin, Sansaver responded, "as soon as the weather is conducive to pouring cement."

Sansaver is coordinating efforts with Kevin Buckles, Tribal Employment Rights Ordinance director, in arranging for the training sessions. Sansaver is also working with union representatives regarding certification for the cement workers to be trained.

Other entities receiving a portion of the grant money were Peaks and Prairies LLC, \$410,000; Western Bio-Products Innovation Center, \$49,732; and Ethanol Producers and Consumers of Montana, \$87,500.

*(Editor's Note: Portions of this article were taken from a Jan. 25 news release from the office of Governor Brian Schweitzer.)*